

***Revd Gill Putnam***  
**SERMON NOTES – EASTER DAY**  
**10 A.M. COMMUNION, ST PETER’S, MILTON**

*Acts 10:34-43 & John 20:1-18*

***PRAY***

It all seems like a dream now, that week – much of it best forgotten! A huge mixture of love, humility, anger, betrayal, denial, but never did we lose the sense of His love for us all, His willingness to serve both almighty God and each of us. Oh, how He prayed for us, how He provided for us, oh, how he served us – washing feet as a servant does, organising a special meal when his heart must have been heavy. What response did he get – betrayal, denial, desertion. Was he afraid, I don’t know, but I do know how much he suffered, the abuse and the pain .... I couldn’t desert Him, but, oh, to see his suffering was awful, and yet the final outcome, well, we had no idea what was to happen.....

As we reluctantly left His tomb, I never believed I could be happy again, never believed that I would ever again experience the lightness he brought to my heart, the fire that filled my soul as I listened to his teaching, the special joy of knowing him ..... remembering, remembering, remembering – his charisma, his voice, his

eyes, those deep dark pools of divine love, his healing, gentle hands. I had seen him bringing about miracle after miracle, acts beyond any human understanding.

Although I only knew him a short time, just a couple of years, He was everything to me, the only one who had cared and through that caring brought the most amazing healing to my life, transformed my whole being. I'm not trying to say he made me perfect because that's impossible for anyone other than Jesus himself, the one perfect being. No, I'm still a sinner, and I know it, but I have received so much forgiveness and now all I want is to follow his way, live as close to him as I can, seeking holiness, seeking the divine presence in my heart and mind.

And so as I said we left the tomb, hope gone; our precious friend, our Rabbi, our brother, our all in all, dead and buried. What tears we shed as we talked about the old times, never daring to think of the future. Fear was in our hearts, fear that we too would be pursued and killed because we were known to be with him..... what were we to do? Well, we could do nothing during the Sabbath, just wait for the next day and then go to the tomb and anoint his dear, broken body.

I couldn't wait to be there, so I was the first and what a shock I had – the huge stone which covered the entrance to the tomb was moved, an open tomb ,, what could this mean. I rushed back to tell Peter and John, well, I'd never seen them run so fast, racing to the tomb, they went in, where was the body, who could have taken it, where had they taken it. This was incredible, his death was bad enough, but now we had no body to anoint, no way to pay our last respects ..... it was all too much, I couldn't cope with it Peter and John saw the burial clothes still in the tomb, and as they saw they believed Jesus was alive so they went back home, maybe hoping to find him there.

I didn't know what to do, I was in turmoil just standing there by the tomb, weeping ....who would help me, who would take pity and comfort me ..... a woman in tears, shaking and weeping, my heart breaking. I so longed to see him but they said he wasn't there ..... I had to see for myself, how could it be? I bent to look into the tomb, and there were two beautiful figures, clothed in the purest white, their faces radiant, somehow filling the darkness of the tomb with light and peace, and they cared, asking why I wept. I started to tell them but before they could answer, I was drawn to turn around ,, there was a

gardener, he might know ,, he asked why I was weeping and who I was looking for. By now, I was so confused, my mind in chaos, almost hysterical, where was Jesus, where was He, what had they done with him ,,,,, I pleaded, I so needed to find Him, I had to find him, there had to be an answer.

And just as it seemed my heart could bear no more I heard my name, Mary, no one else ever said it like that, it could only Jesus, my Lord, my Saviour ,,,, alive right there. My heart soared, all despair lifted, hope and reassurance filled my soul. His shalom enveloped me, his spirit filled me and life would never be the same again, he had conquered evil, won the victory, life and death changed forever. I was to be his messenger, to share the good news with the others, how I raced to tell them, the tears pouring down my cheeks, tears now of joy and relief, and I was to tell! I knew that it wasn't just for our own group but that I would be telling others now for the rest of my life .... Jesus had given me a task, an opportunity to play my part even though I was a woman, I was to continue what my precious Jesus had started, tell the good news to everyone, so that all might know of his way, his calling for us to love God, and love each other, to have faith in the assurance of sins forgiven and the

promise of life eternal. So that is what I do, and when people ask me what it was all about, why did it happened, why did He suffered so ..... why, why, ..... so many questions, but I tell them the answer is simple: I tell them He did it for you! Amen